



ETERNAL LIFE

By reexamining a story in the Zohar, the Rebbe's father, Harav Levi Yitzchak defines the meaning of a tzaddik's life after his histalkus, and the responsibility incumbent upon his talmidim.

The Zohar relates:

Shortly before Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai was *nistalek*, he spoke with two of his primary students, (his son) Rebbi Elazar and Rebbi Abba. Rebbi Abba cried, and said, "Oy! When [you] pass on from this world, the world will be orphaned from you. Who [then] will light it up?"



The Rebbe's father questions the redundancy of this statement:

Obviously, when Rashbi is no longer in this world, the world is orphaned of him.

He suggests an explanation based on what the Alter Rebbe writes in Tanya¹, that when a *tzaddik* is *nistalek* he is present on all levels even more than during his physical life. His students who connected to him during his lifetime continue to receive from his essence which remains in Gan Eden.

Based on this, *histalkus* doesn't necessarily preclude the *tzaddik* from continuing to illuminate the world, through his students. Since they receive [not just an impression or ray, but] from the essence of his *ruach*, they can continue to radiate Torah with the same power of Rashbi himself. When Rebbi Abba cried, it wasn't in anticipation of the immediate future (as Rashbi had many *talmidim* still alive) but rather a longer term, after all of Rashbi's student themselves would be *nistalek*.



What's the practical application of this?

A few days ago we marked the Alter Rebbe's *yahrtzeit* on Chof-Daled Teves, and soon it will be Yud Shevat. This story from the Zohar is an important lesson for us.

One might ask: Rebbi Abba cried about the passing of Rashbi, despite



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 מאנגעל
 נלב"ע ד' תמוז ה'תשמ"ח
 ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.
 נדפס ע"י
 משפחתו שיחיו

the fact of “מה זרעו בחיים אף הוא” בחיים—his students would remain alive and keep him alive as well.

So this is what the Rebbe’s father teaches: There is only reason to cry for the orphaned state of the world if there are no *talmidim* left after the *tzaddik’s histalkus*. But as long as his *talmidim* follow in his path, his life is perpetuated. The mission

for his students then, as long as they are (physically) alive, is to ensure that they “keep him alive” in the proper manner, i.e. learning his teachings and following his ways.

Moreover, when “his students are alive,” not only will “the world not be orphaned from him,” but even “he, himself, is alive”.

As the Rebbe Rashab said, “I

am going to heaven, and leave the writings [of Chassidus] to you.” By leaving his writings down here, and them being studied, he remains very much here! **T**

(Based on *sichas Shabbos parshas Va’era 5742*)

1. Iggeres Hakodesh siman 27



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